

Final Adopted

SIMI HILLS - CENTRAL BELL CREEK PROJECT PLAN

Project Site Description

The Simi Hills-Central Bell Creek Project Plan (Project Plan) area consists of approximately 9.5 acres of open space along and adjacent to the Bell Creek flood control channel in the western San Fernando Valley. The Project Plan area is entirely within the Los Angeles River watershed near the confluence of Chatsworth Creek and Bell Creek. Chatsworth and Bell Creeks, together with the Arroyo Calabasas make up the western portion of the Los Angeles River watershed. The headwaters of Bell Creek contain a considerable portion of the recently acquired 2800-acre Ahmanson Ranch property. Accompanying exhibits show the context of the Project Plan area to surrounding parkland and roads.

Governmental Entities with Jurisdiction Over Project Area

City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles County Flood Control District
California Department of Fish and Game
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Planning Objectives and Principles Sought to be Achieved by the Project

The objective of the proposed plan is create a river parkway along Bell Creek between open space surrounding the Bell canyon debris basin at Valley Circle Boulevard and Shoup Avenue. This open space connects to public open space adjacent to Ahmanson Ranch. Under ideal conditions, all private parcels identified in this Project Plan would be acquired in fee simple by a public park agency. In addition, access easements or license agreements would be obtained from the Los Angeles County Flood Control District to allow for a recreational trail and native landscaping along one or both sides of Bell Creek.

Proposed Land Uses

The proposed land use is to create natural parks on both the Cluster One and Two parcels. Such parks would include native vegetation, wildlife habitat, paths and signage. They are envisioned to be open from dawn to dusk.

Detailed Site Analysis

The Project Plan area is entirely within the Canoga Park area of the San Fernando Valley, City of Los Angeles. It is in State Assembly District number 40, Congressional District number 30, Senatorial District number 23, Supervisorial District number 3, and Los Angeles City Council District number 3.

Bell Creek is a mostly trapezoidal concrete-lined flood control channel with dirt access roads on either side. Typically a fence runs between the channel edge and each parallel access road. The continuity of a trail along both sides of the channel has not been fully studied. Two north flowing tributaries join the south side of the Creek. Bridges will be necessary to maintain a connected path on the south side of the channel. The impediments caused by major street crossings will require additional study.

Shoup Avenue Parcel Cluster One

The acquisition portion of the Project Plan includes two separate clusters of privately-owned parcels. Cluster One contains two parcels, totalling approximately 3.5 acres by Shoup Avenue. APN 2024-024-023 is 0.63 acres and abuts 500 feet of Bell Creek. The eastern portion of this 3.5 acre parcel is contiguous with APN 2024-016-026. These parcels are close to 12-acre Los Angeles City-owned Shadow Ranch Park. The portion of APN 2024-016-026 targeted for acquisition is approximately 2.8 acres, and fronts over 350 feet of Bell Creek. Access to the property is via Sale Avenue from the south or along Bell Creek flood control easement. Both of these parcels are dirt lots.

Cluster One parcels contain feeding habitat for Canadian geese during their annual migration. Other wildlife reported on the site include deer, coyote, field mice, toads, frogs, song birds, and a variety of waterfowl and raptor species.

The developed portion of APN 2024-016-026 is contiguous with a site of a former psychiatric hospital and was recently acquired by California Home Builders with intentions to build 20 one and two-story 3,000-square-foot homes on minimum 7,000-square-foot lots. On its January 8, 2004 meeting, the West Hills Neighborhood Council approved California Home Builders' plan to develop the property. California Home Builders has contacted staff and is willing to negotiate a deal on all or a portion of the property.

One can readily drive to these properties from the south on the fully improved road stub of Sale Avenue. The new owner recently fenced this entrance. For 30 years prior the

neighborhood had full access to the open space. An easement granted by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District would allow east-west trail access and wildlife movement along Bell creek both towards Sepulveda Basin (downstream) and the Simi Hills (upstream).

Sherman Way Parcel Cluster Two

Parcel Cluster Two is located approximately halfway between Shoup Avenue (Cluster One) and the Bell Creek Debris Basin at Valley Circle Boulevard. Cluster Two consists of four parcels totalling approximately 6 acres that abut Bell Creek where it contacts Sherman Way. The parcels are bisected by the unimproved Woodlake Avenue right-of-way owned by City of Los Angeles. West of the Woodlake Avenue right-of-way are APNS 2026-001-017 and 2026-001-019, both dirt lots. APN 2026-001-017 is a 1.4 acre lot that abuts Los Angeles City owned property to the west, and APN 2026-001-019 is a 1.15 acre property that fronts the Woodlake Avenue right-of-way.

On the east side of the Woodlake Avenue right-of-way are APNS 2026-001-018 and 2026-001-020, totalling 3.62 acres. APN 2026-001-018 (1.56 acres) fronts Sherman Way and contains a building with historic value (Lederer Ranch). Considering the proximity to a historic resource and many schools, an interpretive center with potential parking should be considered for the northeast portion of APN 2026-001-018. APN 2026-001-020 is a 2.06 acre parcel that is connected directly south of APN 2026-001-018 and abuts Bell Creek. This parcel has an access point at the terminus of Vose Street and also fronts the unimproved section of the Woodlake Avenue right-of-way to the west.

Parcel Cluster Two offers a large open space area adjacent to Bell Creek. Access to these parcels can be gained either from Sherman Way at the north, or by Vose Street at the eastern boundary. Alternative access from the south side of Bell Creek can be gained by a foot bridge at Royer Avenue. The property manager of these parcels has been contacted by staff and may be willing to negotiate a deal via the landowner on all or a portion of the parcel cluster. The Lederer Ranch used to be over a hundred acres. The subject Parcel Cluster Two parcels represent the remainder of the Ranch south of Sherman Way.

Government Agencies, Organizations and Private Parties Consulted

Staff has been in contact with:

Tom Henry, Chief Planning Deputy, Councilmember Dennis Zine's Office

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Shawn Evenhaim, California Home Builders
West Hills Neighborhood Council
Marcia McNally, College of Environmental Design, University of California at Berkeley
Glenda Reed, Property Manager, Francis Lederer Estate
Verne & Carolyn Greenwood, property owners

The following government agencies, organizations and private parties have also been notified of the Project Plan:

Ginny Kruger, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky's Office
Manuel A. Mollinedo, Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks
Tom Glick, Linn Wyatt, Los Angeles City Planning Department, South Valley
Frank v. Bonoff, Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering
Scott Harris, California Department of Fish and Game
Marion Lederer, property owner, Francis Lederer Estate

Analysis of Economic Feasibility of Proposed Project

This economic feasibility analysis addresses the potential for a public agency to acquire the properties addressed in the Project Plan. The proposed project could be funded by many sources within Proposition 50, and by River parkway funds in Propositions 12 and 40, and various sources within Proposition 13. The City of Los Angeles may also have funding sources including Proposition K and Proposition A. No appraisals have been conducted to date. Portions of the subject properties could also be obtained as a dedication from development entitlements.

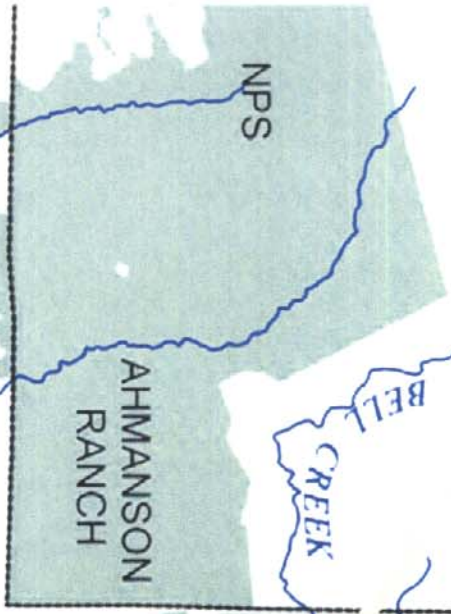
Protected open space



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SMMC
1/26/04

SIMI HILLS

PROJECT PLAN SITE



Deer Lake Highlands
SANTA SUSANA MT STATE HISTORIC PARK

CHATSWORTH RESERVOIR

Canoga Park

Hidden Hills

ARROYO CALABASAS

Calabasas

MULHOLLAND HIGHWAY

TOPANGA CANYON BLVD



VENTURA FREEWAY

Tarzana

Encino

SEPULVEDA BASIN

Reseda

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Northridge

Granada Hills

CHATSWORTH








TOPANGA STATE PARK

MULHOLLAND GATEWAY PARK

ENCINO RESERVOIR

SIMI HILLS-CENTRAL BELL CREEK PROJECT PLAN VICINITY MAP

-  Subject project plan boundary
-  Subject project plan properties
-  Los Angeles Flood Control District Property
-  Protected parks & open space
-  Other public property (schools, municipal, etc.)

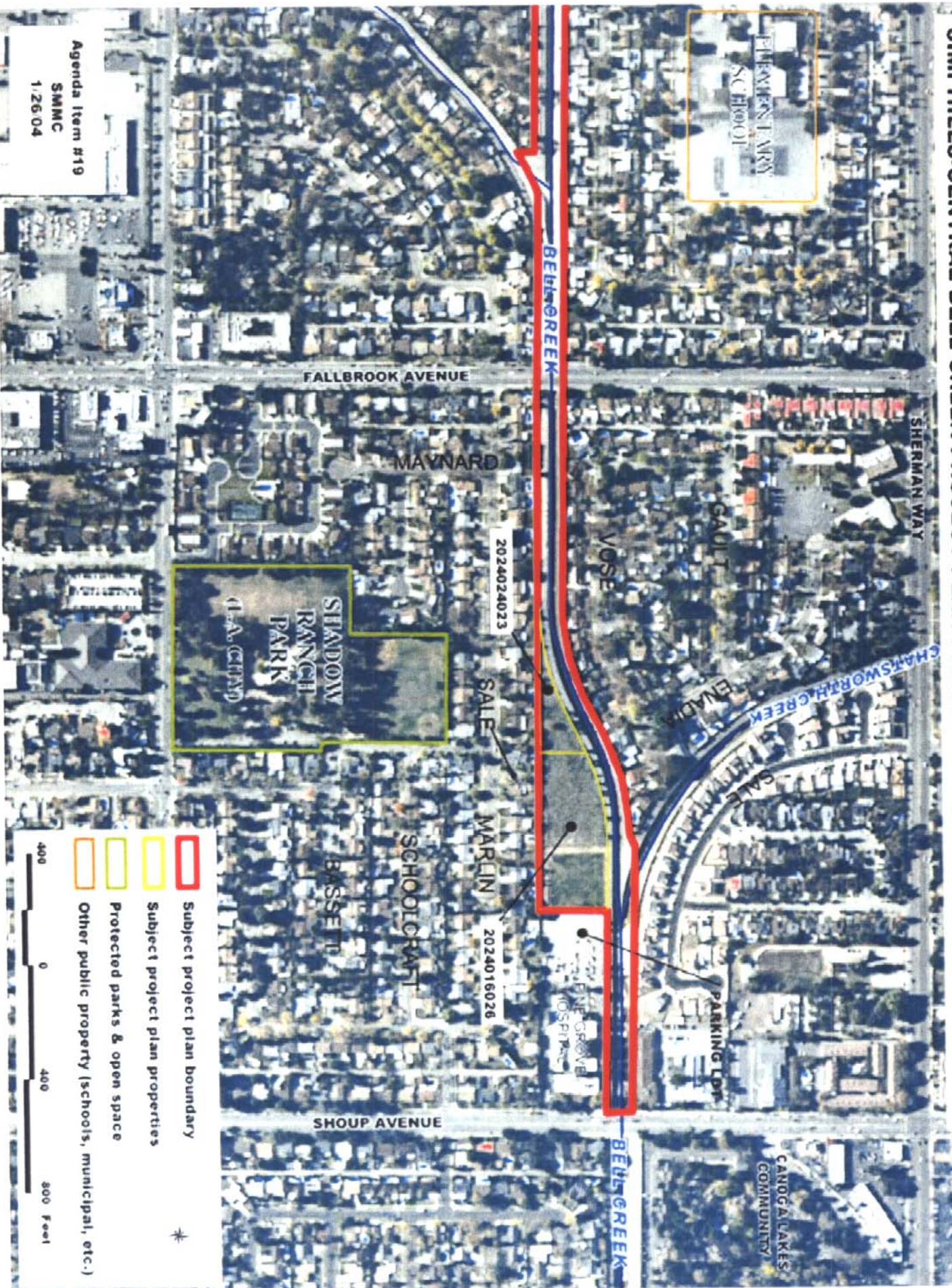
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SIMI HILLS-CENTRAL BELL CREEK PROJECT PLAN AERIAL MAP

SIMI HILLS-CENTRAL BELL CREEK PROJECT PLAN PARCEL CLUSTER ONE AERIAL MAP



SIMI HILLS-CENTRAL BELL CREEK PROJECT PLAN PARCEL CLUSTER TWO AERIAL MAP



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Subject project plan boundary

Subject project plan properties

Protected parks & open space

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